

Ross Garner 0:07

Hello, you're listening to the Future Talent Learning podcast developed to help you build your leadership and management skills. I'm Ross Garner,

Ross Dickie 0:14

and I'm Ross Dickie.

Ross Garner 0:15

This week, we're asking, should we all be working four days a week? The answer is yes. Thank you for listening to this episode of the Future Talend Learning podcast, no. I'm joking. I'm joking. I'm joking. We're going to get into it. And to do so we are joined by Tash Walker, founder of market research agency, the Mix Hello Tash.

Tash Walker 0:35

Hi, how you doing?

Ross Garner 0:36

Very well, thank you know, everyone at the Mix has been working four-day week for five years, we're going to find out what their experience has been like. So Tash, maybe you could get started by explaining why you work a four day week at the Mix.

Tash Walker 0:52

Great question. So why we work four days a week at the Mix and have done for the last five years is that five years ago, we recognised amongst our clients and also amongst the consumers that we did lots of research on, that everyone seemed to be a bit jaded. Should we put it that way, a bit tired a bit over emailed a bit over meetings. And we started to think about why that was. And we reflected on our own experiences in our own business.

And we decided that actually our relationship with work could become a little bit broken. And so we wanted to investigate a different work pattern that would suit us better. And that would lead to happier, healthier employees, and also just a better relationship with work in general. The one thing that is the benefit of running your own business is that you get to try stuff. So we looked at all sorts of different experiments that other people had done, so that we could jump on

the back of them and learn from their mistakes. And actually, there weren't that many interesting experimental ways of working that we really found, you know, there were people doing things like on a Wednesday, you'd have a couple of hours off to go to the gym, or, you know, maybe in the summer on a Friday, people would finish at three and go to the pub.

But really beyond that there wasn't anything that really tackled the fundamentals of how we work until we stumbled across the 40 week movements, which as all great things had started in Scandinavia, because apparently. So we looked into it a little further. And we found that there had been lots of good case studies of companies in Scandinavia working four-day weeks, including their version of the NHS. So it felt like they'd tried and, you know, had gone through the pain of the experiments.

And actually, it did work. And we decided that that was the best fit for what we wanted to do. Because actually, it was the one thing that we found, which would actually really make us tackle our relationship with work in a quite fundamental way, it wasn't something that was going to be tinkering at the edges, and therefore we could kind of limp along and carry on with the same old thing. So it felt radical, and it felt radical enough to make us do something different. And that's where we found it exciting. And so five years ago, we embarked on our, I guess, challenge, if you like, which was to be a four day week business, and we're still doing it. So something's worked.

Ross Garner 3:02

So I had asked am, why do you work four days a week at the max, I could just as easily have asked why do you not work five days a week? And so the answer to why you don't work five days a week would have been things like burnout and exhaustion, unhealthy relationship with work, and so on. Just before we get into the rest of the discussion, I wonder if you could outline what you mean by a four day week? Do you mean everyone's doing 12 hour days, four days a week? Or what does it mean for salary and all those kinds of things?

Tash Walker 3:32

Yeah. So again, just in terms of how it works for us, lots of companies do different four day weeks, but our version is that everyone works the same four days a week. So we have Friday's off, everyone is paid the same, we have no

salary reduction on the basis of our four day week. So people get exactly as they had been paid and have gone on to get promotions and pay raises and bonuses, etc. So we pay people the same as we would do ordinarily.

And but as I said, we do have a kind of non flexible day off if you like, which is every Friday. So for us that means that we set out emails to out of office, we have a WhatsApp group where we can contact one another in case of emergencies, which doesn't happen very often. But on the odd occasion it does somebody's there to take an email or take a call if necessary, usually one of the senior directors, so we are not working on but we are we have a couple of mechanisms to check in with each other just twice a day. So once the morning and once in the afternoon.

Ross Garner 4:28

And then just on the hour point, how many how many hours are people working

Tash Walker 4:32

Ah normal. So our normal working hours are nine till six. That's what we've always done. And we are flexible when it comes to where people want to work. So we have a really nice office now. We encourage people to come in to get together. But we also allow people to work from home a bit. And yeah, nine til six, our normal working hours.

Ross Garner 4:52

So I'm what I'm trying to do is I'm trying to catch you up with any loopholes that might exist where people are actually not working. They're actually doing a normal like full day Five days a week, but in some whatever the form, but the short answer is there are no loopholes, and people genuinely experienced a reduction in their hours and no reduction in their pay.

Tash Walker 5:08

Yeah, absolutely. That's the whole point. And I think that it's a good question, though, on the basis that it means that we have to really think about how we work together, I don't think as a four day week business, you can expect to just cut one of your days off in a week and still be doing all of the same things that you used to do.

So it's a good question, in the sense that, yes, it does mean that you need to really think about what you're doing with those four days so that you can achieve them. But know what it doesn't mean is that you should just be cramming everything in so that you're working, you know, those 12 13 14 hour days during those four days in order to get your day off, where you probably have to lie in a dark room, because you're so exhausted. So yeah, that's the thing to avoid, and how to do it is absolutely critical to success.

Ross Dickie 5:50

I think you kind of touched on some of these already. But it strikes me that there are a lot of misconceptions surrounding what a four day week looks like. And I think that's what puts a lot of businesses or organisations off pursuing it. Can you elaborate on those would be good to get your thoughts on this?

Tash Walker 6:06

Yeah, definitely. So I think one of the myths, misconceptions that business owners have is that it's going to be incredibly complex to implement, and therefore that it's just unachievable in their organisation, it's gonna create absolute chaos. And I think it's important to note that there are complexities that for a week creates, but all of those complexities are resolved by really thinking about your relationship with what you're doing in those four days, and being really, really clear about the practices and processes that you employ to make sure that your processes are streamlined as possible and as efficient and effective as possible. So that's the first thing is, it doesn't have to be really, really complicated. The second is that it's anti commercial.

And I think this is something that I hear a lot of an awful lot, which is that, actually, funnily enough, when I first started the four day week at the mix, I used to go into talks about this all the time. And at the time, we were I think, 15 people were small business. And so when I would talk about this on stage at different conferences, people would be excited for me, and they'd go, Oh, that's so good. It's brilliant, well done.

And they'd also almost treat it like it was my cupcake business. And what I mean by that is that it's, you know, cute, you know, company and lifestyle choice, you can achieve such lovely things, because you know, you're not really in it for the money are you and you're not a real proper business.

Ross Garner 7:26

No shade to cupcake businesses who are

Tash Walker 7:31

very serious businesses, very important. But I think, whilst we are not Amazon, in terms of our scale, we are 35 people, we have been going 10 years, we are a profitable business, a good business, we get good margins, we've grown year on year, we're accomplishing our commercial goals, and we have still big goals to achieve.

So I guess probably the second big misnomer is that people suggest that you go to a four day weekend, it's because you've sort of lost your ambition. And that it's an anti commercial premise, that is for people who just don't really want to work that much. And so therefore, possibly can't possibly be interested in the commercial side of running business.

Ross Dickie 8:12

Yeah, I think there's possibly a perception that, well, if you can do the same thing in four days, why not just take that productivity funnel that productivity into five days now we could do even more than we're currently doing?

Tash Walker 8:24

Yeah, absolutely. And again, you probably ended up in a dark room on your Saturday or Sunday, if he, if he even took close his days off, and I get it, right. I think people do have a very hungry, you know, I guess appetite for work and making money and all those kinds of things.

So I guess you could say that by doing? Yeah, yeah, you done more. But actually, I don't know, I think the practice of running a business these days is complex and running a business well, and managing staff well, and making sure that your people are looked after and your product is well looked after, as well is, you know all about creating a sustainable business. And, you know, I think flogging your team doesn't necessarily get you to where you want to get to, and you lose people.

And I think, you know, we've all heard of things like the great resignation, that's happening at the moment. And one of the hardest challenges that business owners face is how to retain and keep people who are good, and how to how to attract top talent. And I think if you can't do that really well at the moment, then that is going to be much more significant threat to growth than, you know, if you were simply able to work harder and harder and harder.

Ross Garner 9:32

And is super attractive. I was to look at the mix versus one of your competitors. And you were both incredibly keen to hire me then the mixes for the week, which seemed like a very, it is a huge benefit to work in there. I am going to keep hammering on the commercial point, though, just for a minute.

And then we could talk about something less grubby. So the I saw someone discussing this on Twitter the other day, and they were saying basically what it boils down to is if you're going to work for would use rather than five, then you have to deliver less.

Their point was that there's absolutely no way you can deliver the same volume in less time. And so you said you were still profitable and still had decent margins and so on? Would you be more profitable their margins? If you worked a fifth day? Or do you dispute that claim?

Tash Walker 10:17

I would just beat that. Because I think that's a really reductive way of looking at four days a week. I think most people and I think this is where the big mistake happens, most people look at four days a week and say, right, you've just chopped off a portion of your week, that's what you've done, you've just reduced your Yeah, exactly, you've just reduced all of the time that you can be doing to make something else.

And actually, again, as I mentioned, that's a really reductive way of looking at it, what we have done is to deliver the same, in fact, more work. And we've done that by really rethinking our working practices, and rethinking how we work together to make sure that we are as efficient as possible. And in order to do that, we've become much more innovative as well. And I think what that's led to

is a much more interesting relationship with the work that we do and the products that we create for our clients as well, which has led to more work. So actually, I would argue that actually on the complete contrary to that, for us, I think 40 week has been a real catalyst for growth. I'm not suggesting that by doing a 40 week, you'll make money.

But what I've actually found for us is that it's led to us having to really think about what we did together and how. And in order to do that, we've also been able to have some interesting conversations with clients that's led to more work and agile practices, which I think our competitors cannot get near.

So I really, really dispute the notion that you can't make more money or can't sustain the growth that you want to make like a dental 40 week, but it does mean that you have to tackle your working practices, first and foremost, and think about the kind of changes that you might need to make at a leadership level in order to do that. And that I think, is a completely different conversation and one every business should be having, regardless of whether you're a four day week business or not. Yeah, for sure.

Ross Dickie 11:58

I think there's a thing where I think we've probably all been in meetings like this, where the meeting will expand to fit the time that you've allotted to think some possibly also applies to the working week. And so some people might be listening to this thinking, Well, I'm and back to back meetings five days a week, how could I possibly, if I cut one of those days out, those tasks would just need to move to the next week. But then how many of those meetings are actually essential?

Or do they need to be an hour? What could the be 30 minutes. And so there's a there's a major study last year in Iceland, looking at public sector workers whose 2500 workers switch to a four day week, which was 500 is a decent sample size, but also accounts for 1% of Iceland's working population. So pretty sizable.

And what this study found is that productivity generally remained the same or improved across the majority of workplaces that they study and they looked at sort of health sector, schools, offices, social services, various different sectors have generally found that productivity improved. So I think it's not necessarily the case that if you cut a day off your working week, you're just reducing what you're doing by 20%.

Tash Walker 13:17

I couldn't agree more. And I think actually, I think what that brings up is just a really interesting question around productivity. And specifically, that's been a challenge in the UK for a really long period of time. Now, I think it's one of it, it's been one of the inhibitors of growth of the UK economy for a significant number of years. And so I think it does raise an awful lot of questions around the, you know, wastage that happens in business.

So I'm not talking about, you know, practical supplies, I'm talking about time and efforts and duplication of work and unnecessary practices, which, quite frankly, are a waste of everyone's time, we have a very practical tip that I can share quickly, which was one of the foundational things that we did as a business to help us really understand how we work together. One of the big things that we found is that in looking into 40 businesses, and in fact, you know, tinkering at the edges of design of business, in general, is it there's a huge assumptions that are made in businesses in terms of what each of you do, and each of your roles. So we all sit in our business and think I know my business really well.

I know what my job role is, and I know what I'm doing. And I think everyone else does as well. But actually, everyone thinks that and yet everyone is pretty much wrong all of the time. And so that leads to huge amounts of duplication of work or efforts or exactly to your point, Ross, you know, turning up to meetings that you absolutely don't need to be in or that perhaps you didn't exist in the first place. So one of the things that we did initially was an exercise called toast. And this is actually something you can find on YouTube.

It's a TED talk that was done a number of years ago. And the whole premise is that if you described how to make a piece of toast to anyone, and if you ask



somebody else to do that, you each have your own slightly different version of that. And you need to apply the same principles to your own business practice. This. So if each of you in your business literally writes down what you think you do what you think your role is, and put it on a big board or post it notes.

And if you look at that, what you'll see is that actually, each one of you has a slightly different version of events. And so the whole exercise is around editing and refining, until you get to a singular definition of who you are, what you do, what your job role is, and what its relationship to everyone else is. And actually, you eradicate an enormous amount of the, you know, time consuming endeavours that a lot of people have to go through their job role on day to day basis, simply by that one simple exercise. And that's just one of several that we did in order to help us get to a more efficient, more productive place.

Ross Garner 15:41

Working a five day week is, to an extent arbitrary, I think it could be a six day week, I think what people were really good at is identifying the stuff that is low priority. So you're already doing that in your five days a week. So I guess as you compress your 14 week, all you do is you sort of you just naturally set aside the bollocks because you're you're focused on the stuff that's going to be high value and high priority. And the stuff that you kind of don't have time for well, probably wasn't that important.

Anyway, if it had been that important, you would have prioritised it. So it's maybe almost natural to to get rid of some of the the wastage just by having less time to do it. And you spoke there about productivity, you've touched on wellbeing as well. I wonder what other benefits that are afforded the week, and I'm particularly curious and benefits for your customers?

Tash Walker 16:31

Yeah, it's good one, I think fundamentally, for our clients, what we have always described is this idea that, you know, mostly in marketing services, you're operating in a world of selling ideas, you know, you're some degree, you can be creative ideas, or it could be, I don't know, whatever, they're all ideas, and come up with ideas, you typically need to feel quite fresh, and not jaded and not overwhelmed, and not anxious and not kind of frazzled by the working week.

And so one of the major benefits that we talk to our clients around is this idea of us turning up to be fresh, not frazzled.

And that's what they're paying us for, they're paying us for good ideas, they're not paying us to, you know, just, I don't know, come up with the same old, same old because quite frankly, we're in the eighth meeting of the day, and we've still got four more to go. I think there are a whole spectrum of businesses that just feel a bit tired. And I think that's probably because their people are tired. So the idea for us first and foremost was that we would have better thoughts, because our people would just feel more as though they were in control of their vehicle that came to their work life balance.

I think there's a second part of that as well, which is that the mix is a research business. And so our primary goal is to help our clients understand people. And if our work life balances out, then our ability to just look at the world and see it with those kind of interesting, interested eyes is really, really challenged. And so again, just enabling our team to be in the world doing the things they want to be doing.

And that doesn't have to be highbrow it can literally be watching Netflix or doing laundry don't really care. But if you're experiencing more of life, then you will have more to share when it comes to the kinds of observations that we have around other people. So for us, it's about intellectual property, it's about making sure that our people are good and rested, and that they have the ability to see the world enough so that we have good ideas to sell.

Ross Dickie 18:18

Have you found any disadvantages, just listening to you. I think the mix sounds like an amazing place to work. I'm almost wondering if you're hiring anyone at the moment. But have there been any disadvantages to the four day week, you wouldn't get good resumes.

Tash Walker 18:31

That are no disadvantages to a four day week, however, there are, I would say things that you have to be prepared to do to achieve a four day week. And I don't think that's necessarily a disadvantage. But it's a housekeeping. And four

day week is not something that you just do and that you achieve, and then it's done and that you are forevermore a four day week business. It requires a commitment.

And it requires an element of discipline and continual, I guess probably self reflection and self improvement, because it's so easy in the world work that we work in today to slip into bad habits. And so it's something that we have to constantly wrestle with and to slightly adjust. And it's a living thing. It's not something that just suddenly is done and accomplished. So it's certainly not a disadvantage, but it's something that's a very conscious decision and therefore it requires upkeep and maintenance.

I'm which for some might feel like a burden for us. It's important. And so therefore we make it important, and that's why we continue with it. I wouldn't describe it as a disadvantage, but I think it's something that you have to go into with your eyes open rather than it being a kind of panacea or Disneyland version of life. It's not just going to fix everything overnight, it still means that you have crap to deal with. Right however, it's worth it. And so I wouldn't describe it as a disadvantage.

Ross Dickie 20:00

How did you cope over the pandemic? By which I mean, there's a lot of data suggest that people find it. I think as they transition to home working, there was a sort of blurring of the lines between work and life. And people were working longer hours checking their phones, weekends and things. And so if you have that, for the week, from Monday to Thursday, how did people adjust to the pandemic? Or did it not have any effect? Because it was already sorted the way you were working anyway?

Tash Walker 20:32

I think it's it's a really good question. And I think probably answering in a really honest way, we really struggled with it in the pandemic. And so we had to do and I think this is a great example of the fact that four-day week is a live active thing. We did need to do a reset once the pandemic was finished, because I think we certainly found absolutely over the two years that bad practices have crept in that people were probably on the emails more than they should have been on the Friday that there were absolutely, to a point really blurred lines

when it came to work life and home life. And I think that's something that we struggled with as much as any organisation, we probably were more acutely aware of boundaries, because boundaries are really important before they wait businesses.

And so we probably clocked it maybe sooner than other businesses. And we certainly invested in people in terms of trying to help them create the boundaries that they had, or could get to at home. But I think it's fair to say like a lot of businesses, it's not something that I think we ended up in a perfect space. You No, absolutely wouldn't say that. And I think as I said, as a consequence, we did a reset once we were back together more once we were back working in a more standard way. Because we recognise that 40, we could become smushy. And I think for us, it needs to have clarity, and it needs to have the boundaries for it to be meaningful. And that was really important coming out of COVID. For us that we we did a big reset,

Ross Garner 21:56

How do your customers react to you not working a Friday is that problematic?

Tash Walker 22:02

And well, the first time that we tried a four day week, we did a kind of three month trial, and we didn't tell customers, and that was very intentional, because as a business owner, you know, like lots of business owners, I would have been very concerned around revenue and around maintenance of client conversations and just being approachable and you know, receptive to communications.

So we didn't tell them. And what we found was that they didn't notice. So we are out of offices on and you know, like you do, you say I'm at a workshop today, or sorry, I'm doing 10 things. And so therefore, I'll get back to you when I can and see your Monday. And so we did that. And literally none of our clients noticed they did not notice a dip in services or standards or any of the things that I was worried about. And so that was really a catalyst to actually go on and do the four day weekend full. And subsequent to that we have communicated quite strongly that we do four days a week. So it's part of our pitch, it's part of our values.

It's part of the thing, we talk about clients when we first meet them. And what we found is that clients are typically incredibly supportive. And to the point where, you know, if we do have Fridays, where somebody is emailed back to a client, actually, clients will tend to hold us to account and say, Hang on, it's your four day week don't do that. So actually, what we found is that 40 week has been much more achievable, because our clients are so supportive. I think for lots of our clients, they're working in more flexible environments now.

And actually, some of our clients are working four days a week, not necessarily in 40 week businesses, but are you know, changing their habits and relationships with work and are trying to help us to do the same thing. So it's a very kind of, I think it's a community endeavour, to some degree, it's something that we can only do because our clients are supportive of that and help us to do that, and have been incredibly brilliant, actually, I'd say, in terms of how we do the work that we do. And as I said, there have been no significant car crashes. What we do is not life and death, people are not losing their lives on a Friday because we're not around.

And so I think clients really recognise that and have been incredibly, as I said, brilliant in terms of helping us to, to define a weak and supportive

Ross Garner 24:12

that's a that's very specific to you to your business. So you're a market research agency. That's right. Okay. And so what if you were a bridge inspector, or I thought that just because I met bridge inspector, they're doing that's not like a normal job and

Tash Walker 24:32

you've chosen a niche, a niche example there

Ross Garner 24:39

What if you were Shell, or either Hewlett Packard or somebody

Tash Walker 24:45

I don't run those companies, but 40 weeks have been achieved in big

companies. One example more recently is that Panasonic in Japan have moved to a photo business. Panasonic are a big company, they're a manufacturer. And I think probably the biggest times that I see some people maybe maybe struggle to understand the application, a four day week is probably in those much more sort of manufacturing based scenarios where you've got very clear deadlines, and you've got 24 hour operations, for example.

So I don't know how those work exactly what I can tell you from the research that we've done and from the work that we do with other organisations that afford a week is that they have slightly more flexible approaches to four days a week. So instead of it being Monday to Thursday, everyone has Friday off, everyone has different rotor patterns, so that everyone does a four day week, but perhaps not the same four days. So that becomes a more flexible approach to four day week that works for a slightly larger organisations. And we know that that has been trialled and actually has worked in in, you know, very significantly large scale organisations.

Ross Garner 25:49

Yeah. Good. Good news for all of the bridge inspectors listening to this and wondering, yeah.

Ross Dickie 26:00

Whether they're a bigger or a small company, if anyone's listening to this, thinking about moving to a four day week for advice would you give them

Tash Walker 26:09

I would say that there are probably several things that are important to achieving a four day week. One is that absolutely don't see it as a reductive idea. Think about what you are doing in your work, and how you can be efficient and effective with the work that you do. So I think the first thing is that you have to have an open conversation about how you collectively work, no one can achieve a four day week, as a leadership team in isolation, you can't sort of just dictate that, that's what you're going to do. And that that can happen seamlessly. You have to have open honest conversations with your teams to work out what working practices you need to put in place. And whether that means that you need to work in more interesting ways, or agile ways.

And you need to think about that and do the work. To find that out. What that can lead to is lots more productivity, lots more innovation. So that's an exciting process to go through. But it's the absolute first and foremost thing to do, absolutely, is to really think about your working practices, so that you're doing brilliant things with your four days, not just trying to cram it all in to four days. And then the second thing is communication. As I mentioned, you cannot achieve this in isolation, it has to be something that you widely communicate both internally and also externally. And it can become something that you hold yourself accountable for and the more you communicate to others, the better. I think quite famously, John Lewis always talks about the idea that a principle is only principle when it cost you something. And for us, I think four day week is is one of those principles.

And so by communicating widely, you hold yourself to account that it's important to your business. And therefore if you need to make sacrifices in order to deliver it, then great, you'll do that. So again, I think that notion of communication becomes a really pivotal, ongoing, important way of delivering 40 week. And then the last thing on the back of that is just, again, don't see it as being a decision that's made once in a moment in time. And that's it and it's delivered, and it's accomplished. It's an ongoing living organism, it has to be tended to it's like sourdough. You can't let it die. You have to let it really live, you sometimes don't get it right. Sometimes things go wrong.

Again, in that kind of world of food allergies, and allergies, it might be a bit consider like a diet, you cannot just let it go and expect that all will be well you have to continue to think about it and continue to think how to implement it. And if things go wrong, then it's fine. You pick it up next week, you'll try harder. But it's something that's living and breathing and that you have to think about not just considered to be done in one moment, and it's finished.

Ross Garner 28:43

All right, Brian, I feel like we've Ross and I have weirdly adopted the position of defending the five d week on this podcast, which I don't think either of us gave it intending to do. So I think we are both quite keen on this idea. And we'll be pursuing it further.

Ross Dickie 28:57

Every opportunity I have to mention before the week in our company calls I I bring it up just the idea of like planting that seed that someone in senior leadership put virtually think it's a we should really do some theory.

Tash Walker 29:14

Can I ask you guys a question of what would you do with your Fridays? If you had a Friday off? What would you do with them?

Ross Garner 29:18

Never take this idea seriously enough to consider it? Mmm

Ross Dickie 29:22

hmm. I think I would just travel more. So I think when I take annual leave, a lot of the annual leave I take is not I don't tend to take sort of two weeks off at a time I tend to take a Friday or a Monday because I've spent quite a lot of time up north in Scotland and to go certain places. It's just not really worth it to leave by late on a Friday and then have to be back by Sunday. So I think I've had an extra day. Probably travel a bit more. I think just exercise as well.

Can make excuses for not exercising at the end of a workday when you're knackered. And so I think I would probably go for a long go for long runs. I mean, these are all the virtuous things that I'm saying I would do, I'd probably just sit and veg on the couch to be honest, but maybe they wouldn't be the worst thing either.

Ross Garner 30:11

You know, I think I would veg on the couch as well. And then I think I'd get bored and I'm horrified they might get into my head that it's a good idea to start a podcast.

Ross Garner 30:20

What do you do Tash?

Ross Dickie 30:22

Yeah, what do you do?



Speaker 2 30:23

I do a variety of things. I think there's absolutely no shame in voting on the couch doing laundry, you know, life admin, I think part of the joy of it is that it gives you a bit of breathing room. And I think quite often we all feel a little bit like the week is so full, that by the weekend, you're sort of doing administrative tasks and, you know, domestic chores, and therefore, by the time you get back around to Monday, all you've really done is shopping, and washing and cleaning.

And it's just, you know, doesn't feel like it gives you the opportunity to have the mental space that you want. So Friday, I think for me can be a bit of kind of letting off steam, I have no a one year old daughter, um, and so I do a lot of childcare on Fridays, and that's our time together. And that's great.

And that's pretty nice. For some people, they have side hustles. And it's much more sort of, I guess, formalised in terms of maybe pursuing a side hustle or new thing that you might want to learn. But I don't think people should feel pressurised into thinking that it's always gonna be something terribly worthy, or, you know, in the pursuit of self improvement, I think that's a mistake to think that needs to be like that. It's great if it can be sometimes but I think also sometimes you just need that moment. Go for a run, did a bit of laundry, the good stuff?

Ross Garner 31:33

Yeah, my wife does a nine day fortnight. And actually, when you were describing it there, I was thinking about what does she do on her every second Friday is off. And she she brings things forward from Saturday, basically. So she'll do all of the appointments that she's kind of stored up on that day or she'll like, cleaned the house and stuff. And then Saturday arrives. And that's actually the day that she's got to like, rest and stuff.

But had she not had the Friday off, it wouldn't be a day of rest, it would be frantically doing other stuff. All right, let's wrap up. Ross D, what are your main takeaways from this conversation?

Ross Dickie 32:06

Well, other than the fact that I definitely want to move to a four day week,

Ross Garner 32:10

I mentioned that, yes.

Ross Dickie 32:12

Let's talk after the podcast. I think for me, the main thing is I think like, like Tasha was saying that sort of like the idea of this toast exercise.

So I think one of the sort of challenges with moving to a four day week is thinking about your existing working practices and looking at how you can sort of drive efficiency in those.

But I think that, for that to be effective, your team or your organisation needs to have a shared understanding of what it is they do the things that are important. So I think may actually trial this to sexes and just see what comes back. So you have different people within the organisation perceive the work that we do. And it's important.

Ross Garner 32:55

I think, for me, I was struck by how difficult it sounds difficult on an ongoing basis, I think I thought there would be a transition point where you'd be, you know, radically changing the way that the business operates and how you're available to customers and so on. And that that will be there'll be a thing to overcome.

But actually the way you described it as this ongoing effort to make sure that the I guess that 50 doesn't creep back in, that's really the risk that you're trying to keep under control. So something really struck me a dash board, when I do would you like people to take from this conversation?

Tash Walker 33:26

Four day week is absolutely what everyone should do. It's, it brings so many benefits to my life personally, but also I know the lives of the people that work for me. And it's incredibly worthwhile.

And I think absolutely, to your point, it is an endeavour, it's not something that's necessarily really, really simple to achieve, but it's really, really worthwhile. And the collective effort that it requires also brings an awful lot of new fresh thinking into a business that's perhaps an unexpected benefits to the way that we definitely work.

So for anyone considering it, then, you know, look into it, do your research, come talk to me because I am a huge evangelist, I think for 14 weeks. It's it's really, really powerful. A powerful thing, I think in any kind of business. So it's not straightforward, but it's certainly beneficial and it's certainly worthwhile effort.

Ross Garner 34:25

Now, let's move on to a regular feature. One thing I've learned this week where we share something we've picked up over the past seven days. Ross, would you like to share something first of all? Yes, absolutely.

Ross Dickie 34:36

So I have been reading Let my people go surfing by Yvonne Chu nerd. I think you pronounce his surname is the founder of Patagonia. I think this is the first business book I've ever read. I've read a lot of sort of business adjacent workplace psychology. related books, but this is the first one I've read about sort of how somebody started a business and their you know their philosophy Isn't the company and I haven't finished it yet, but I'm really enjoying it. And there's sort of so he talks about the history of the company.

And then their design philosophy, their production, philosophy, distribution, philosophy, and how those, each of those things align with the company's values who the public company is. And the design chapter starts by sharing this anecdote about how he'd had a conversation with their head of design, how the head of design so the Patagonia's mission statement on the things in their mission statement is to make the best product. And the chief of design said, we will never make the best shirt because best shirt is a \$300. shirt made in Italy from hand woven materials. And it's just yet incredibly expensive to produce.

And then everyone's response was, Well, what happens if you put that in a washer dryer, and the design team said, Oh, we never put it in a washer dryer because it shrink ruined everything. And so that led him to say, well, for us, making the best product is about picking something that is durable and will last a long time. So it kind of comes back to that toast thing. It's like this different understanding of what it means to make the world's best product. So they have this sort of codified philosophy of what design good design looks like at Patagonia. It's not for good design looks like everywhere, but it's what it means to them.

And everybody in the company has access to that has access to this. And so that kind of a shared understanding of what it means. And it made me think about the work that I do as a learning designer, on the work we do within our team and just thinking about how many people are like how different members of our team might perceive that. So providing a lot of food for thought. And Tasha, what have you learned as

Tash Walker 36:49

well that's a very serious one. Mine is a lot more lightweight, I'm afraid. I'm reading a book at the moment by Stanley Tucci. So he is

Ross Dickie 36:57

I love Stanley Tucci

Tash Walker 36:59

Yeah, it's good. It's good

Ross Garner 37:01

actor slash man-about-town and personality.

Tash Walker 37:04

Oh, yeah, man about town, generally awesome dude. And for those of you who don't know Stanley Tucci, you might have come across him during lockdown for his martini making skills.

Actually, he is also famous for appearing in, lots of films, etc, etc. And actually more and more. He's a writer, and he's written a memoir of sorts called Taste.

And I am particularly fascinated by both people and food, which is part of my job.

And he has written a memoir about his Italian roots and heritage and it's a joy. It's an absolute joy to read. It takes you to beautiful Italian places where he absolutely regaled you with the stories of food from his childhood. And one of the things I learned this week was around the origins of spaghetti bolognese.

And the fact that you should never have bolognese sauce with any kind of spaghetti in any way, shape or form. It's incredibly wrong to have that shaped pasta with that kind of Raghu it's in fact a crime against humanity in standard teachings. You should only have flat rough pasta so tagliatelle perhaps papardelle perhaps but absolutely never spaghetti. And so that's something that I learned this week.

Ross Garner 38:18

That's great. What would you eat spaghetti with Do you know?

Tash Walker 38:23

Maybe vongole like clams.

Ross Dickie 38:26

Mmm. I was gonna say that. spaghetti vongole

Tash Walker 38:28

Yeah. And it's clams.

Ross Dickie 38:30

I love pasta, pasta is my Achilles heel. Don't have a particularly sweet tooth. I could have pasta for every meal. I'd never get sick of it

Speaker 2 38:38

live for I think what it what is it today? Tuesday. It's we're on our third day of pasta today. It's bad isn't it? Pasta is life

Ross Dickie 38:46

sounds great.

Ross Garner 38:50

Well, this week, I discovered Penguin Classics publish these. Hold up to the camera for you guys. But no one has these tiny little like, extracts of like famous writers. Yeah, it's adorable. It's um. This is Oscar Wilde's popped up on Amazon. Bezos recommended it to me. And it's called only dole people are brilliant at breakfast.

And it reads almost like the book of parables like it's these tiny little like one or two sentence like extracts from various ratings of Oscar Wilde. And I'm reading it it does sound like someone doing a sarcastic takedown of Oscar Wilde. So, for example, here's one of the things he wrote. I am so clever that sometimes I don't understand a single word of what I'm saying. Like someone taking the piss out of Oscar Wilde, but it's a it's really delightful. And so

Ross Dickie 39:38

I thought that was a that's actually the exact book that I have. I have one of those little black books and as Oscar Wilde I have as well. I think the I think the title appealed to me as well. Yeah, my must be No, I'm not a morning person. So I thought this seems to give credence to the fact felt like actually, it's something brilliant about me that I like to sleep in.

Ross Garner 40:08

Great. Well, thank you very much cool to you. Thank you so much for sharing your experiences of the mix. Where can people find out more about you and what you do

Tash Walker 40:16

[themixglobal.com](http://themixglobal.com) See our website or check me out on LinkedIn Tash Walker.

Ross Garner 40:21

Excellent. We'll put links to all of that in the show notes. And that's it. You've been listening to the future talent learning podcast with me, Ross Garner and Ross Dickie. Our guest this week was Tasha Walker. Until next time, bye for now.